DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 949 CE 038 797

AUTHOR Love, Rebecca
TITLE Field-Based Teacher Education Experiences: Design for Success.
PUB DATE 30 Jan 84
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (New Orleans, LA, January 30, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Credits; *Field Instruction; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Internship Programs; *Professional Development; Retraining; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Education; Teacher Workshops; *Vocational Education Teachers
IDENTIFIERS Mississippi State University

ABSTRACT

A vocational teacher education project sponsored jointly by Mississippi State University, the Mississippi Department of Vocational and Technical Education, and the Appalachian Regional Commission afforded an opportunity to develop a working model for the implementation of field-based activities as a measure of professional development for educators. Results of a needs assessment administered to vocational teachers to determine their professional development concerns provided the basis for developing priorities and program activities. Strategies used in delivery of the project's services included (1) providing inservice training through workshops at individual vocational centers, (2) offering college-level vocational education courses on and off campus, (3) supplying supplemental instructional materials, (4) certifying skills through the National Occupational Competency Test, (5) establishing an individualized graduate intern and assistant program, (6) using graduate assistantships, (7) providing tuition assistance, (8) offering technical assistance, and (9) determining what industries would work toward skill upgrading of teachers and in what manner. Results of the project included the awarding of credit by Mississippi State University for successful completion of the National Occupational Competency Test, development of a vocational education personnel development data collection/dissemination system, and a study of the effectiveness of approaches to professional development. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED242949

Field-Based Teacher Education Experiences:

Design for Success

Paper Presented at Association of

Teacher Educators Meeting

New Orleans, Louisiana

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

January 30, 1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R Love

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Rebecca Love, Ed.D.

CE038797

One of the more interesting developments in teacher education at colleges and universities serving relatively rural populations is the trend toward field-based activities as an approach to use in the professional development of teachers. A vocational teacher education project sponsored jointly by Mississippi State University, the Mississippi Department of Vocational and Technical Education, and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) afforded an opportunity to develop a working model for the implementation of field-based activities as a measure of professional development for educators.

The project was begun because of rapid expansion in vocational education in Mississippi. During the 1970's, Mississippi's vocational educator population grew from 1,860 to 3,540 and the number of centers providing vocational-technical education grew from 26 to 98. This growth was even more phenomenal in the Appalachian area.

The rapid increase in numbers made it necessary to recruit and hire a large number of new vocational teachers. Many of them, particularly in the areas of agriculture, health, technical education, and trade and industrial education, had not received any teacher training prior to being employed in vocational education. Many of these beginning teachers did not have bachelor's degrees, and many of those who did, held degrees in non-education disciplines.

The State Department of Education was committed to quality teacher preparation and recognized that the number of teachers had increased dramatically, while the funds for teacher preparation had not kept pace. Therefore, meeting the need for quality vocational teacher training and development programs was becoming increasingly difficult.

In an effort to develop a comprehensive approach to vocational education personnel preparation and development, the State Department of Education requested and received funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission to implement a pilot project in the 20 Appalachian counties. The approach could be expanded statewide at a later date.

The project began in 1979 and lasted through 1983 as a cooperative effort of the State Department of Education (Vocational-Technical Division), the Appalachian Region Commission, and the Department of Vocational-Education and Technology at Mississippi State University. The purpose of this presentation is to share the components of the project that contributed to its success. This should be useful in planning similar projects.

Steering Committee

An active steering committee was utilized in all program planning, implementation, and evaluation activities. The committee consisted of a mixture of the population that was served as well as the professional educators and administrators involved. The committee was defined as an organized body without legal authority to commit resources or direct personnel; it advised and assisted the Project Director regarding policy and/or the professional staff regarding programs and procedures, relative to the Comprehensive Vocational Teacher Education Program for the Mississippi Appalachian Region.

In particular, these areas were involved:

1. Assessing program needs.
2. Developing priorities.

3. Developing and selecting program strategies, projects, methods, techniques, etc.

4. Securing support for the program from the population served, educators, administrators, and the public at large

5. Providing linkage between the program and vocational teachers

6. Providing feedback on program implementation

7. Monitoring and evaluating program efficiency and effectiveness

8. Recruiting personnel.

The committee consisted of 12 members, appointed by the director of the project. Appointments were for a one-year period and broken down as follows:

1. 1 representative from each junior college in the ARC region (3 members).

2. 1 representative from each of three selected local secondary vocational complexes (3 members).

3. 1 vocational teacher from each of three selected vocational complexes (total of 3 members).

4. 1 representative from the Research and Curriculum Unit, MSU, who had expertise in training non-degree teachers and developing personnel development instructional material.

5. 1 representative from the Vocational-Technical Division of the Mississippi State Department of Education.

6. 1 representative from the program staff at Mississippi State University (served as ex-officio chairperson of committee).

Members served without compensation except that actual expenses involved in committee business were reimbursed.

The project staff consisted of a director who was employed half time as an associate professor in the vocational education department of the university, Dr. Harry Holloway; an assistant director, Mr. Gerald Richardson; and myself as project coordinator; a secretary, and graduate assistants and interns.

Introduction of Project

People were informed of the project objectives through letters, meetings, conferences, individual interviews, and news releases. This was critical to establishing credibility and encouraging participation.

Needs Assessment

A 40-item, 3-page needs assessment was administered to vocational teachers to determine their professional development concerns. The competencies listed on the assessment were from a national study conducted at Ohio State at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. The results provided the basis for developing priorities and program activities.

The instrument was administered to the 264 vocational educators in the ARC region. It had been field tested with the steering committee. They suggested a simpler version of it, so that change was made. (See Appendix A for results.)

Several strategies were utilized in delivery of the project's services.

1. Providing In-Service Training

   To reach the greatest number of people in the shortest length of time, in-service workshops were prepared on the basis of the needs assessment. More than 1500 participants were involved in the 105 in-service sessions. These workshops were scheduled at the individual vocational centers at the request of the director of the center. A list of the offerings was made available to him or her, and each center was visited by

a staff member for the purpose of scheduling sessions. The sessions were conducted by the project personnel who had the required expertise within the specified area or an outside consultant.

2. Offering College Level Vocational Education Courses Both On and Off Campus

Selected vocational education courses were stratgeically located and designed to fill area needs. (Vocational courses continued to be offered on the MSU campus on a consistent basis through the year.) Some project funds were utilized to teach on-campus courses that represented additional effort for MSU with regard to the project.

Mississippi requires that newly-hired vocational teachers hold high school diplomas and have at least two years of journeyman level or above experience in their occupational fields. Once hired, teachers must earn 25 hours of college credit or six credits per year to become certified. There is no financial incentive, however, for further professional development beyond certification. Teachers with earned bachelors degrees are on the same salary scale as certified teachers. Without extrinsic incentives, most teachers have chosen not to take college courses and have had very few other opportunities for professional development.

By supplementing the offering of courses off campus, vocational teachers were afforded an opportunity to participate in more courses. Eighteen courses were taught, and 157 vocational teacher or administrators were enrolled.

3. Supplying Supplemental Instructional Materials

A variety of resource materials were pulled together. A fairly open policy of sharing these resources within the ARC region provided vocational educators with relatively easy access to them.

4. Certifying Skills through NOCTI Exams

The National Occupational Competency Test was utilized to provide teachers with a realistic basis for maintaining and upgrading occupational skills. This test provided incumbent vocational teachers with a measurement of their occupational competency level. Another idea behind this component of the project was to develop the research base for determining whether or not NOCTI exams should be used in Mississippi as a screening device for selecting vocational teachers, as a basis for awarding academic credit for work experience, and for determining salary increments.

The exam was administered in 3 fields, with 58 instructors certified. Written and performance tests were administered. A national survey was conducted to study awarding credit for work experience as verified by NOCTI.

5. Establishing an Internship

An individualized graduate intern and assistant program was established. It was designed to provide opportunities for graduate interns to engage in a series of relevant activities which could not otherwise be experienced. It also provided opportunities for vocational teachers to reap the benefits of

university and field-based training efforts. Enriched learning experiences for students as well as a feedback path to the university teacher training department resulted. Twenty-one graduate interns went through the program. The majority of the materials developed by the project were produced by them. They were paid $750 each and received 3 hours of graduate credit.

6. Utilizing Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants were referred to as training associates and paid in accordance with the degree they were pursuing. They were involved in materials editing, acquisition, and development.

7. Providing Tuition Assistance

An effort was made by the project staff to stimulate and encourage non-degree vocational teachers to pursue a bachelors degree as a means of helping them become better qualified and more professional teachers.

Teachers were informed of the options and benefits of and opportunity for pursuing a B.S. degree through mailouts, interviews, and visitation. Very little response was received to this offer. The project was prepared to pay half the cost of tuition for non-degree teachers who wanted to work toward a degree (limited only by the fact that the courses could not be the initial certification courses or ones taken for recertification).

8. Offering Technical Assistance

On-site assistance to vocational administrators, teachers, and counselors in solving problems relating to vocational program development, implementation, and evaluation was offered. This provided an opportunity to maintain personal relationships with various clients after they were established. It involved spending a great deal of time in the field and allowed teachers to request help in their own environments.

9. Determining Industrial Skill Upgrading

A directory was developed as a result of a survey of business and industry in the ARC region showing what industries would work toward skill upgrading of vocational teachers and in what manner.

Problems Encountered

In any project designed to serve a large group of people with diverse interests, making all things relevant to all members of the group is difficult. By beginning with a group approach and then working with individuals later in the project, this problem was minimized.

Local school personnel are sometimes hesitant about asking for or accepting outside help, particularly from a university. This hesitancy on the part of some of the schools made persistence an important quality of the project personnel. A feeling in some schools of teachers versus administrators made it difficult to work as a group with personnel in a school where such a feeling exists.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The focus of the project was the improvement of instruction. Some administrators did not view that as their responsibility.

Major Research Conducted

1. Mississippi State University now gives up to 30 hours credit for successful completion of the National Occupational Competency Test. The number of hours depends on the score: It counts for courses in the Trade and Industry area. A similar test can be utilized to receive credit in secretarial science.

2. Development and field test of a vocational education personnel development data collection/dissemination system was also developed.

   The purpose of this research follows:

   a. To identify the essential elements of a data collection/dissemination system with the capacity to systematically identify professional development needs of vocational personnel throughout Mississippi.

   b. To develop a model for the data collection/dissemination system.

   c. To implement the system on a test basis in a junior college district within the ARC region of the State.

   The results of the field test were presented to the State Department of Education, Vocational-Technical Division, in an effort to provide a means of improving the professional personnel development of

vocational teachers in Mississippi. The information in the system will be designed to yield management data in the form of an individual professional needs profile, an occupational area professional needs profile, a geographic area professional needs profile, an undergraduate/graduate professional needs profile, a professional needs profile by date of certification/licensing, and a professional needs profile by contract length.

3. The controversy over the most desirable strategy to employ as an approach to professional development of vocational teachers prompted another piece of research. It was also an opportunity to determine the effect on the strategies we had employed and determine the amount of improvement perceived by the vocational personnel in the 20 competencies addressed by the project.

   One hundred ninety-one of the same teachers who completed the initial needs assessment for the project also completed an assessment of professional development. It consisted of two parts:

   a. A rating of the amount of improvement perceived in each of the 20 competencies addressed by the project's activities.

   b. Rank ordering of the strategies responsible for improvement.

   The strategies listed for rank ordering included those employed by the project: experience, college courses, in-service training, self study, membership in professional organizations, improved instructional materials, and others. Teachers ranked these from 1 to 7, with 1 being most important.

The instrument went to teachers only--no counselors, administrators, or remedial teachers were included. Seventy-two and three tenths percent of the teachers completing the original needs assessment completed this instrument.

The results of the assessment revealed that significant improvement has been evidenced by instructors in the majority of the competencies addressed by the Comprehensive Vocational Teacher Education Program. These results indicate that membership in professional organizations, college courses, and in-service training are the strategies most effective in encouraging professional improvement of vocational teachers. The conclusion is drawn from this data that strategies for professional development of instructors which provide for structured exchange of information and professional interchange are the most useful for vocational educators.

The data revealed that while the majority of vocational instructors (64.9 percent) perceived experience as the factor contributing most to their professional development, experience was not statistically significant in improving any of the 20 competencies dealt with by the project. This leads to the conclusion that the instructors' perception of the contribution of experience to improvement in teaching competencies is greater than its actual contribution.

The data revealed no significant difference in responses by age of instructors or subject area taught. It is concluded, then, that the variables of age and subject area have little

bearing on vocational instructors' perception of improvement in teaching competencies.

A significant difference is revealed in responses by individual schools, implying that the internal environment in the school setting influences instructors' perceptions of instructional improvement strategies and improvement of teaching competencies.

The only statistically significant difference in perceptions of instructional improvement strategies was in experience. The data indicated that the post-secondary vocational teachers perceived experience to be of greater importance in improving instruction than did secondary vocational instructors.

There was a significant difference in the perceived improvement of secondary and post-secondary instructors in the following competencies:

a. Knowledge about how to motivate students to learn.

b. Knowledge of responsibilities for assisting students through counseling and placement.

c. Knowledge to help students develop an appreciation for an occupation.

In all three competencies showing statistical significance, post-secondary instructors reported more perceived improvement than did secondary instructors. From these results, it is concluded that the intrinsic problems of motivation, counseling, and development of an appreciation of an occupation encountered by vocational instructors are more pronounced and/or difficult to overcome at the secondary level.

Recommendations for Field 3ased Activities

1. Professional development activities for vocational instructors should be based on strategies providing structured exchange of information and professional interchange.

2. Participation in professional activities by vocational instructors as a means of improving instructional competence should be encouraged by local vocational administrators.

Results of the Project

1. As a result of the project's activities, college credit is now awarded at Mississippi State University for successful completion of the NOCTI test.

2. A gradual trend toward performance-based and individualized education has been evidenced in the State as a result of many of the project's activities.

3. The interns who worked with the project serve as a continuing resource for the ARC and for the State. This has expanded the resource base for vocational educators in the area and State, also.

APPENDIX A

NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

RESULTS ARE EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGE OF
TEACHERS INDICATING A GREAT MODERATE NEED
FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERTISE IN A SUBJECT

	SUBJECT	PERCENT
1.	OBTAINING SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL	77
2.	MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN	68
3.	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS	61
4.	MAINTENANCE OF TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY	59
5.	WORKING WITH THE HANDICAPPED	57
6.	USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES	52
7.	SELECTING LEARNING ACTIVITIES ON THE BASIS OF STUDENT'S APTITUDE, INTEREST, ETC.	49
8.	HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION FOR AN OCCUPATION	48
9.	COMMUNITY RELATIONS	46
10.	MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES	45
11.	WORKING WITH CRAFT/ADVISORY COMMITTEES	45
12.	METHODS OF TEACHING VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	45
13.	STUDENT COUNSELING, PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP	42
14.	ADOLESCENT LEARNING THEORIES (PSYCHOLOGY)	40
15.	INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION	40
16.	PROGRAM EVALUATION	38
17.	PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	38
18.	TEACHER CERTIFICATION	38
19.	ADULT LEARNING THEORIES (PSYCHOLOGY)	36
20.	WORKING WITH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS	36
21.	USING TEACHING AIDS EFFECTIVELY	36